

INGENIOUS SLOT MACHINES

Contrivance for Public Use in Vogue in London Town.

HOT WATER FURNISHED FOR A PENNY

Drop a Penny in the Slot and Tea, Coffee, Cocoa or Plain Beef Can Be Had—Gas Sold the Same Way.

LONDON, Nov. 15.—A "slot" machine of an exceedingly novel and ingenious nature is about to be introduced to London, as well as to several of the important provincial English cities. Hitherto the heat given out from the ordinary street gas lamp has been a waste product, but Dr. Mansfield Robinson has invented apparatus to utilize this heat for the purpose of boiling water, which will be supplied at the rate of a halfpenny per gallon by means of an automatic machine.

At the Crystal Palace, where the apparatus has been exhibited in working order for months, it has attracted no small attention. Dr. Robinson's invention is simplicity itself. In a spiral coil and heating chamber, placed about a foot above the flame, cold water supplied from the water mains is converted by the heat into steam, which is expelled through a safety valve down a pipe into an iron coil placed in a tank at the foot of the column.

The steam then boils the water in the tank without coming into contact with it and the fluid is ready for automatic delivery to any

direction. The demand between 12 and 3 o'clock, when thousands of dinners are being cooked on the gas stoves, is enormous, so great, in fact, that at present it has been a problem to get sufficient gas through the mains to meet the wants of the exigent housewives, who are baking the family joint, roasting excellent roast from the corner's point of view has been the equalizing of the summer and winter consumption. Formerly there was a great disparity, but now in the summer months the housewives who have gas stoves at hand drop a penny in the slot in order to boil their kettle or do any little cooking, and thus save the trouble and cost of lighting a fire, at the same time consuming a large quantity of gas.

And, looking at the matter from the consumer's point of view, and that five can obtain 2 1/2 feet of gas for a penny. An ordinary burner consumes at the rate of 5 1/2 feet of gas an hour, so that a pennyworth of gas will light a room from, say, 5 to 10.30, while a similar quantity will enable a little cooking to be done. In the depths of winter the very poor have been known to put practically their last penny into the coin meter to obtain a little warmth, one poor old creature pathetically observing to the collector, "if we hadn't had the machine, I think we should have perished with the cold."

It is not surprising to learn that there have been attempts to cheat the penny-in-the-slot meter. In the meters which were first supplied the weight of the penny set the mechanism in motion, but with the pattern now in vogue it is necessary to turn a handle after dropping in the coin, and if a penny with a piece of twine attached be introduced by any person of felonious purpose, the throwing machine simply cuts the cord and annexes the coin with the coolness of a living gas collector.

THE SLOT MACHINE IN SCOTLAND.

It is of course out of the question for dishonest persons to effectively cheat the penny-in-the-slot machine which is put up in their own abode by means of dices of metal or spurious coins, since the imposition is de-

stroyed by the fact that the coin is not dropped into the slot, but is turned by a handle after dropping in the coin, and if a penny with a piece of twine attached be introduced by any person of felonious purpose, the throwing machine simply cuts the cord and annexes the coin with the coolness of a living gas collector.

At 1 o'clock the cattle appeared to be sleeping profoundly. The cowboys say that cattle dream and see ghosts; it is certain that this drove of 15,000 was nervous, made up, perhaps, by the storm of the previous afternoon and the rain, which they had eyed with suspicion. It is likely that a great many cattle in that vast accumulation, and whose collector they will tell him of the fact and hand over the pennies or receive change, as the case may be. The collections are made at intervals of about three weeks, and there has been an actual dearth of copper money in South London, owing to the fact that £10,000 in pennies have been locked up in the gas company's coin meter. Since this method of supply was introduced the officials assure that they have not lost a dozen of their coin meter consumers a striking testimony to the popularity of the system.

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It was in the years just preceding the incident related, says a writer in the Independent, that I saw service as a cowboy and was thoroughly familiar with life on the trails.

Of the incident itself I was not an eyewitness, but it was told to me by my friend, Mr. M. B. Davis, an old Texas ranger and cowboy, who is to the early life of Texas what Joaquin Miller is to California.

I give the story as nearly as I can remember it just as it came from his lips. It chronicles one of the most desperate stampedes ever witnessed by a Texas cowboy.

In 1876, the Wilson brothers of Kansas City having purchased over 15,000 head of cattle in Hamilton, Comanche, Coryell and Bell counties, and having arranged to centralize the herd near Comanche Springs, in McLennan county, drove to the Bennett Hills and went into camp to await the carrying out of their order.

The cattle were driven across the Leon at various suitable fords and converged on that beautiful prairie, in the center of which now stands the town of McLennan.

At the end of the month of July of that year the entire herd was under way, headed for Towash on the Brazos river.

It was a magnificent army of steers, in superb condition, kept together by a corps of twenty-five cowboys, mounted on broncs—men experienced in their business.

The herd was not pressed, the object being to let them graze on the rich herbage to which they were accustomed, and to keep them from reaching the market in time to catch the best prices, in the fall of the year.

At 4 o'clock in the afternoon there were signs of an electric storm, a lightning cloud hovering above the hills, and the sun shining against it painted a rainbow which appeared to touch the earth at both ends.

The entire herd became nervous, and showed their fear by those low howling, ominous to the experienced cattleman as the muttering thunder.

The cowboys were experienced men, and they kept the moving mass well in hand, so that when the sun set all was well, and the cattle were bedded on the plains near the South Bosque, and night settled in with the promise of a safe crossing at the Brazos the next day.

A dawn of a beautiful morning was made for the first watch, and these mounted sentinels took their places and rode silently around the sleeping quadruped of long-horns.

The first watch ended at 9 o'clock, and a second watch went on duty. I was during the second watch that the memorable Wilson stampede occurred.

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It is likely that a great many cattle in that vast accumulation, and whose collector they will tell him of the fact and hand over the pennies or receive change, as the case may be.

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